

# COMMON GROUND



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1949

VOLUME III NUMBER 5

PRICE : THREEPENCE

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## Religion and Society

DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

*Douglas Woodruff studies the relationships between Religion and Society and shows that the value of the principles of Religion, and their impact on Society, are far greater and more important than modern materialistic philosophies would allow.*

A FRIEND of mine, a merchant trading with China, said to a Chinese merchant that today's crisis is indeed a terrible business. "Yes," said the Chinaman, "and the worst of it is that it has been on for at least 2,000 years." "However," he added with the philosophy of the ancient East, "everything has its compensations, and in that long time we have learned certain things about our crisis, and the first is that war must not be allowed to interfere with trade. The second is that trade is pointless without profits, and so we conclude that trade with profits must come first, and wars and commotions must come second." He voiced no doubt a general aspiration of humanity and one which the thinkers and students can best help mankind to realise. After looking at the recorded past, they can detach what are the real principles which bring into existence the societies in which men can till the earth, make things and exchange them, and what are the conditions which on the contrary encourage wars and what the Chinaman called "commotions."

The historian looking back over recorded history, can find plenty of reasons for war and disturbance, for the human race is in a constant process of change, is dynamic, now in one part and now in another. Men would never have had any stability, and stability is necessary for good agriculture, manufacturing and trade, as well as for more valuable things, the life of the mind, leading up to contemplation, if they had not set out to counter-balance the natural restlessness and constant change in the distribution of strength and physical advantage. To do this, they have built up custom, law, inherited rights, and the sense that a nation lives all

the time in more than the mere present moment, that the past and the future ought to be and are realities in the mind of the present, influencing what each momentary generation thinks and feels and does.

### **The Purpose of Religion in Society**

The central purpose of religion is not to act as a cement or an underpinning of human society. On the contrary, human society exists to enable men to practise religion, the primary end for which they are made. But it naturally and indeed inevitably happens that when men recognize what their true end is, they then behave in a fashion which creates the conditions for a good human society. The social advantages are in a sense a by-product, but as our contemporaries today are much more interested in the by-product than in the main end, it can be useful to elaborate a little the nature of the influence of religion upon society.

Perhaps the apologists of the great universal religions have tended to dwell mainly on the positive achievements of priests and kings, the leaders and makers of the people, Moses and Aaron, the lawgivers. This was the excitement of religious history for the Jew and the Mohammedan and the Christian, that men came speaking with authority, translating the general commands of God into particular orders, giving, as we have learned to say today, directives. That was a natural emphasis through all the long centuries, when the great human problem was how to build something, how to construct and to create; and the heartbreak of human history was the way nothing endured and so much was consistently being swept away in violence. Small wonder that the ancients venerated at the outset of their histories the shadowy figures of a Solon or a Numa—and saw how everything flowed from the successful lawgiver.

### **Lack of Security in Society**

But in the twentieth century it is perhaps more useful to think about the law takers, the vast majority at the receiving end, the people whose contribution to the welfare of their fellows has come primarily from their obedience, their acquiescence, their acceptance of small and laborious roles, for it is this that disappears where men lose faith in the greatness of their individual destinies. And in the twentieth century there is so little security because political power based on mass parties and mass electorates is the prize and possession of men whose essential trade it is to preach that, by superior force of numbers, men can transform their conditions to their great advantage. Those who preach this are in general transferring to a materialist and mundane setting an attitude of mind that is forward-looking, because both the Jew and the Christian are men with



Associated Press

*"... political power based on mass electorates."*

forward-looking religions expecting something great to happen. They are religions of hope and they have produced in the Western world something which the ancients did not know, the confident idea that the future was going to be better than the past, that the golden age was not behind men but before them, and the New Jerusalem waiting to be built and entered.

Today's tragedy is that this aspiration, widely diffused, is itself one of the chief causes which prevents the improvement of the condition of mankind. That condition is improved where there is a combination of stability with personal freedom, so that the vast wealth of mental and physical energy which comes into the world when human life is generated can most completely realise itself. Through most of history, young men, as they have grown up, have become aware of solid reasons for continual fear and caginess, for they have become aware that they were in the power and at the mercy of some ruler or group stronger than themselves, and in most times and places to grow rich was to invite the cupidity and the violence of such men.

### **Proof of Civilisation**

Real poverty, or the appearance of poverty, was a constant measure of prudence, and it was the great test of the good ruler that men dared to try to become more prosperous than their neighbours; that they were not

afraid to show their prosperity. It is common enough today to hear comment on the presence of grossly irresponsible and weak persons, like wealthy, elderly women with lap dogs, to hear exclamations that such incomes and such people ought not to exist and that their existence is in itself a criticism of the society in which they flourish. But it is a profounder and a more important reflection that the existence of such people is the best possible proof of a high civilization, of a civilization where everyone has learned to respect possession and inheritance, even when it passes into weak hands, even when it is used in foolish ways.

The eighteenth-century divine, Paley, wrote a vivid description of eighteenth century man when he asked what we should think if we saw a lot of pigeons busily collecting seed but keeping hardly any of it for themselves and making a great heap of it, and depositing this heap in front of two or three pigeons with nothing in particular to recommend them, not the strongest or the most beautiful, but perhaps rather weaker pigeons than the others. For so it is with wealth, he wrote, that the majority of men toil and accumulate and then pass most of their accumulation into the hands of those who, by one legal title or another, as landlords or owners, can decide what share they shall take and what share they shall leave.

### **Two Important Values in Society**

We can be sure that this discipline has not been learnt by men without prolonged trial and error. But it has been discovered to be the only means of ensuring two things which are of immense importance and value to everybody: the security of property, including inheritance, and the authority of law. Without these things, it is to every man's advantage to live, as Hobbs saw him living, in the state of nature, to live by the forms of violence and cunning which produce the most immediate, if transitory, results, and out of such societies no civilization can come.

The great civilizations have come out of the acceptance of the principle of inheritance with all its inequality, out of the acceptance of classes, pushing the development of certain human qualities, aptitudes and attitudes further and further in particular directions, through a specialization extended over generations. No man can measure what it has meant to the world that a high code of courtesy and good manners, the manners of a gentleman, the attributes of a lady, were slowly perfected inside a minority through the medieval centuries, establishing new levels of the refinement of manners, of which the benefit is felt today in all the continents. These codes were partial and imperfect. Every reader of Froissart knows how limited were that chronicler's sympathies to those of



**THE ANGELUS**

*"... the humblest and hardest lives have all made their contribution to the relief of man's estate."*

Millet

gentle blood, and yet the conception of gentle blood brought with it the things which would never have been achieved if they had not first begun inside a particular class exempted from all kinds of common burdens and toils.

To the ancients it seemed natural that civilization should be the affair of the few. As the Latin poet Lucan puts it: "The human race lives in the few." To the ancients the wealth of mankind was undreamed of, and we today know very well that the whole of humanity can hope to live well, that there is enough knowledge and invention to make the earth support an immense population, provided the great condition can be secured that men can concentrate on the relief of man's estate, instead of upon their conflicts with each other.

It is reasonable to say that the humblest and hardest lives lived in the past have all made their contribution to the relief of man's estate, and that those who lived them were making a conscious act of charity when

they accepted the particular narrowness and hardship of their particular place, with an understanding that only by the sub-division of tasks and functions could the collective achievement go forward. Many men could have accepted this in the way soldiers accept the particular work, the duty that comes to them, knowing it fits in to the total result by which armies make history, if they could have been assured that other people, more enjoyably placed, were not abusing their advantages, ruining the collective enterprise, so that to save the total work it became necessary to rebel.

### **Teaching of Religion on Purpose of Life**

No candid historian can fail to admit that over and over again failures and derelictions among quite a few people have nullified the patience and industry of innumerable other men. It is not too much to say of human nature that, in proportion as men have had privileged and special positions, they have been tempted to betray, and have betrayed them. But it is also true that the same pattern has continually to be allowed to re-form, a pattern that recognises special function and great inequalities, both of function and reward, and that it has been the great and saving office of religion, of the transcendental theistic religions which say to the individual man that his life is essentially a testing of his quality, no less and no more, that they have enabled men to do their duty, even when they could see that those whom they were immediately serving were not doing theirs, and that the diffusion of this conviction, the strength of this attitude of mind, has been exactly reflected in the results it has obtained.

There used to be a popular picture of Queen Victoria with a negro chieftain kneeling before her, asking her to explain, to reveal to him the secret of Britain's greatness; and Queen Victoria is handing him a Bible. That was the over-ruling conception of nineteenth-century Britain which has been pilloried and ridiculed as the natural hypocrisy of a people in fact bent on expanding their trade, forcing their goods on more primitive peoples, establishing a political control of them in order to derive economic advantage from the connection. No one would deny that the satirists have plenty to point to, and yet the satirists are not saying the whole truth, or even the most useful truth. The achievement of the people of Great Britain in the nineteenth century was astonishing, was on the whole immensely beneficial to the world, for it really created the international world trade that we take for granted, and in whose restoration we place our best hopes to-day. And those achievements, of the hundreds of thousands of individuals of these islands going out as settlers, as sailors, as merchants, as soldiers and rulers, would never have

been what they were, had not the individual been formed by a strict Christian discipline which inculcated in him a keen sense of the reality of the idea of duty, and not merely duty towards his country, but a duty to God; or, in other words, that there were certain absolute and compelling distinctions between right and wrong, notions of justice and keeping faith which had to guide his conduct.

### **Wherein Lay Imperial Achievement ?**

In the twentieth century we can see that such a code cannot be taken for granted, that it is only too easy for men to make for themselves other codes, as a result of which the strangers who have dealings with them can never have any confidence in them, or know what they will do next. The real imperial achievement of the Spaniards and Portuguese was not political dominion which lasted incompetently and corruptly for eight or ten generations. It was that they did succeed in imparting their faith to new peoples and new continents. Their enduring monument is the faith of the Philippine peoples, of the Goanese, of the great companies of believers in Central and South America. And the real imperial achievement of the British was equally not political dominion but the transmission to educated Asiatics and Africans of certain criteria for civilization, which may indeed be swamped by lower and more primitive things, but which have been accepted and really rule the minds and hearts of innumerable men not themselves born into the European inheritance.

### **Religion and Democratic Faith**

We have sadly to recognise that the English came to the experience of empire when they were losing faith in their Christianity. But what such men as Macaulay really believed in, though it was not Christianity, owed a great deal to Christianity; it was a political and social outlook which could only come where men had first acquired a high view of man as a responsible being, immensely responsible, momentously responsible, for his own actions, with bad inclinations, but made in the image of God, and therefore, in the great phrase of the English Law, to be presumed innocent until proved guilty. These beliefs made possible the kind of optimistic democratic faith which has been our gift to the other continents. Whether it can survive the present separation from its original roots, how far it can be transplanted, only the future will show. But we can say that nothing that happens in the future can undo or obliterate the great positive achievement which history records. And it is an achievement which men know to be more remarkable the more they have read of the general history of mankind.

# The Jewish New Year

Common Ground offers its warmest greetings to J

A MESSAGE FROM THE VERY REVEREND RA

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RABBI

4, CREECHURCH PLACE, ALDGATE

LONDON, EC3 29th July, 1949, 5709

The Liturgy of the Jewish New Year - the anniversary of Creation - is distinguished by its universalism. For our times the appropriate aspect of its message might be concentrated in the words of the typical prayer "that all creatures might form themselves into a single band to do Thy will with a perfect heart". Read, however, in the light or rather the visible darkness of the contemporary international scene, the prayer has the remoteness of apocalyptic form and hope. But it need not be so far off. It could be actualised in our days if the fear of the Lord were substituted for the fear of man. To effect such a substitution is the insistent challenge presented to us, members of all religious denominations.

I believe our Council provides the means for the deeper appreciation of our common dangers and common opportunities. May our Father in Heaven bless our united endeavours.

*Israel Bowtie*

Chief Rabbi

# New Year 5710

greeting  
to Jewish readers for the New Year Festival.

REV RABBI ISRAEL BRODIE, CHIEF RABBI



Photo: Edith Hepner

## The Tishri Holy Days

I. EPSTEIN

*Common Ground has asked Dr. Epstein to write a description of the Jewish High Holy Days of September-October for the interest of Christian readers.*

THE Hebrew Month of *Tishri*, which corresponds roughly to the second half of September and the first half of October, is the richest in the Jewish calendar for festivals and sacred days. On the first two days the Jews celebrate *Rosh Hashanah*, the New Year; on the tenth, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement; and from the fifteenth to the twenty-first, *Succoth*, the Feast of Booths, which is followed on the twenty-second and twenty-third respectively by *Shemini Azeret*, the Eighth Day of the Solemn Assembly; and *Simchat Torah*, the Festival of the Rejoicing of the Law. *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, commonly known as the High Holy Days, are designated in Jewish sources as *Yamim Noraim*, the Solemn Days, and are considered the holiest days in the Jewish Year.

### The Meaning of the Jewish New Year Festival

Running through the Holy Days observed at this season is a universal note, carrying with it a message of justice, brotherhood and reconciliation to mankind. This note receives particular emphasis in the celebrations of New Year, as embodied in ritual, versicle, psalm, prayer, song and hymn. Among New Year festivals observed by mankind, none compares in grandeur of conception with *Rosh Hashanah*. Transcending associations that are purely local or national in character, Israel's New Year, unlike that of other peoples, is not the anniversary of some historical event in the life of the nation or one of its founders. The significance of the festival is universal. The idea and ideals on which the festival bids us fix our attention concern the whole of humanity. Its leading themes are Creation, Judgment, Redemption—all universal concepts.

*Rosh Hashanah* is first of all the anniversary of the birthday of the world. In other words, it recalls the stupendous fact that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Contrary to all notions and beliefs that the universe is the mere product of chance, the outcome of accidental collocation of atoms, the festival is dedicated to the affirmation that the world and all that is therein is the work of an All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator. But it is not with mere commemoration that the festival is concerned. As the anniversary of the Creation, *Rosh Hashana* inaugurates a period of divine judgment, when individuals and peoples

are called to give account to God for His creation which He has committed to their care. On this day, in Rabbinic pictorial language, books are opened in heaven in which the deeds of all are inscribed, and judgment is passed according to merit on individuals and nations. Jews everywhere accordingly greet each other with the blessing: "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year"; and many interesting symbols, such as the eating of apples with honey, are introduced at the table on the night of the festival as omens for a good year.

But in the administration of divine judgment the chief aim is not punishment but the turning of the sinners to righteous life and conduct. This makes Rosh Hashanah the beginning of the 'ten days of penitence.' These are indeed solemn days in the Jewish calendar, days marked by repentance, contrition, prayers for divine forgiveness, and resolve for the restoration of broken harmonies with God and fellowman. That, however, is not all. Whilst, as the festival of creation, it recalls a divine act in the *past*, and its summons to divine judgment and penitence is a call to the tasks of the *present*, the *New Year* foreshadows the universal divine event in the *future* towards which the whole of creation is moving, and which can be brought about only through human repentance—the establishment of the Kingdom of God. On this day the *Shofar* (ram's horn) is sounded in all places where Jews meet for worship, and all the host of thoughts and emotions which that impressive act cannot fail to arouse in the minds of the worshippers is pressed into the service of the festival. The trumpet notes symbolically proclaim God's universal sovereignty over man and Nature, and call men to repentance as a prelude to the Messianic world redemption which will inaugurate the universal kingdom of God in which, in the words of the liturgy of the festival "all mankind shall form a single band to do His will with a perfect heart."

### The Day of Atonement

Linked to *Rosh Hashanah* with its universal ideas is *Yom Kippur*. As the culmination of the penitential period *Yom Kippur* is a day of 'self-affliction' (total abstention from food and drink), contrition, repentance and confession. The fast begins with sunset on the previous evening, and terminates with the time of the appearance of the first three stars at the end of the day. The evening service is introduced by the *Kol Nidre* declaration, in which absolution is sought for any vows of self-denial made under duress. Going back to the Jewish persecutions in Visigothic Spain in the 7th Century, when Jews were forced in their thousands to abjure their faith, the historical associations of this



THE SOUNDING OF THE SHOFAR

declaration are designed to serve as an inspiration and a challenge to all those who, through one cause or another, have strayed during the year from the fold of Israel and from God, to return on this most sacred of days to their ancestral faith.

The whole day is spent in the synagogue in prayers and confession. A solemn awe envelops the scene, with candles burning and many of the pious wrapt in white shrouds under the praying-shawl. The most distinctive feature of the service of *Yom Kippur* is the collective confession, particularly of social and moral sins — a confession which is repeated several times during the day. Although the confession concerns primarily individual conduct, there is a corporate responsibility for the misdeeds of our fellowmen from which no truly penitent man should seek to escape. Sin, neither in its *causes* nor in its *consequences* is, after all, a purely individual affair. The dreadfulness of our sins lies, not

merely in their effect on ourselves, but in their devastating effect on the lives and characters of others. Much of the evil done by others could have been prevented by us, and the evil example we ourselves set is often followed, and even outdone, by others. In either case we share the guilt for wrongs which we ourselves do not actually commit. It is this principle of corporate responsibility for sins and consequent corporate duty to repent that the Jewish Day of Atonement proclaims.

And not only for the sins of Israel. The widespread results of our sins cannot fail to affect the outside world, even as the sins of the outside world are not without effect on our own lives. Confession for Israel on the Day of Atonement is thus no longer a simple transaction between the individual and his Creator, or even between God and Israel. It is one in which the whole of humanity is concerned. For this reason, in the sins specified in the collective confession of the Day, ritual trespasses are not included, as these do not apply to the world outside Israel.

In seeking redemption from his own transgressions on the Day of Atonement, Israel prepares himself for the great calling of world redemption laid upon him by God. Israel is yet one day, as his prophets have foretold, to lead all nations in a universal reconciliation to God and to bring about thereby the salvation of the whole human race. The Atonement Day of Israel thus becomes the symbol of the Atonement of Mankind.

### **The Festival of Joy**

The universal note of the High Holy Days is carried over to the *Succoth* festival that follows. Celebrated at the close of the vintage season in gratitude to God for his bountiful gifts, *Succoth* is essentially a festival of joy, joy for the year's labours and achievements. From this joy none may be excluded. Even the stranger and the poor, although they might have had no immediate share in the work, must be invited to participate in this joy, which is to serve as earnest of the universal joy that will come to the world when all men, free from oppression and exploitation, have the opportunity of integrating, under divine guidance, all their forces—physical, moral and spiritual—into the creative system of social harmony and co-operation. A symbol full of poesis of this co-operation is the waving in concept of the four plants—the palm branch, the citron, the myrtle and the willow—in thanksgiving to the Dispenser of all things. These four plants represent in Jewish tradition different types of men, all united in co-operation, the triumphs of which alone are worthy of true joy before the Lord.

Also the special booths in which meals are taken during the festival are not without universal significance. Historically, they help to recall the divine loving care and protection that enfolded the Israelites during their migration in the wilderness. At the same time, the festival booth has always been looked upon as an emblem of the divine Booth which will enfold all the children of man as one brotherhood under the One Heavenly Father. It is this association of the festival with the ideals of universalism that inspired the Prophet Zechariah's vision of all nations gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Festival of Succoth. "Then shall the Lord be King of all the earth, in that day shall the Lord be one and his name be one." (Zechariah XIV, 9).

### **The Festival of the Rejoicing of the Law**

Humanity has still many devious and winding paths to traverse before this vision can become a reality. Neither nations nor individuals have yet realised the essentials of human brotherhood and co-operation to enable them to march onward as one band, towards their God-given destiny. The task, however, of the Jewish people, remains clear. Now as ever, it is to continue to cultivate their specific religious heritage, which alone can impart to them the life-begetting, life-maintaining power for the fulfilment of their divine mission on behalf of humanity. Thus the festival of *Succoth* is immediately followed by the Eight Day of the Solemn Assembly, which is conceived as a festive gathering, appointed by God especially for Israel to come to meet Him, in order to dedicate themselves anew to His service, and to the great universal task He has laid on them. With this festival is connected the celebration of the Rejoicing of the Law. On this day the public reading of the Law is finished, and immediately resumed from the beginning. The day is marked by the procession of Scrolls of the Law around the Reading Desk, and the calling-up of all young boys to the Reading of the Law. For it is only through the continued maintenance of the Law, both by young and old, that the Jewish people will be able to fulfil the sacred trust that God has committed to them in fulfilment of His Creation.

*COMMON GROUND* November-December issue will contain special Christmas messages from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and articles on a New Translation of the Bible, the Celebration of Chanukah in Israel, Jews in Istanbul, Modern Mural Paintings in Churches, the Jewish Book Week, and the final article on Jews in Western Europe.

# Jews in Western Europe

E. J. FEUCHTWANGER

*In this second article of a series of three, Mr. Feuchtwanger continues to describe the place of Jewish communities in Western Europe, and their contribution to the world in which they lived.*

## 2. FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE 18th CENTURY

THE strains and stresses that attended the passing of the medieval order of society had, as we saw in the first article, far-reaching and unsettling consequences for the Jews in Europe. In all fields of human activity the changes, if sometimes slow, were profound: the arrival of the nation-state, the discovery of new continents, the break-up of religious unity, the beginning of capitalist enterprise and many other events of equal magnitude created disturbances which recoiled against the precariously situated Jewish communities. They in their turn, under the hammer of persecution, were seized by religious excitement which found expression in the appearance of several false messiahs. Again as in the Middle Ages, persecution and pressure on the Jews is not the whole story: Jewry made manifold contributions to the development of European civilization.

### Contribution of Hebrew Studies to Biblical Scholarship

The great revival of learning preceding and accompanying the Reformation concerned itself not only with the study of Latin and Greek, but also of Hebrew and the literature of the Jews. In particular it was the *Cabbala*, the Jewish mystic writings, which attracted much attention in the 16th and 17th centuries, and were thought by many to contain the key to the universe in their strange mysticism of numbers and letters. The Italian Neo-Platonist Pico della Mirandola was perhaps the first to recognize, through his interest in the *Cabbala*, the importance of Hebrew studies. From him the lead passed on to Johann Reuchlin, a Renaissance scholar and humanist second only to Erasmus of Rotterdam. Reuchlin, like Pico, was fascinated by the *Cabbala* and saw secrets in every word and letter symbol of the Old Testament. But he was also aware of the need of Hebrew language studies for the purpose of Biblical exegesis and for producing a translation of the Bible more accurate than the Vulgate. Reuchlin learnt Hebrew with Jewish Rabbis, amongst them the physician of the Emperor Frederick III, and published a Hebrew grammar in Latin *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (1506).

His interest in Hebrew soon involved him in controversy. The Vulgate was the version of the Bible invested with the full authority of the Church and to criticise it and deem it capable of improvement implied a challenge to the Church and a dangerous spirit of irreverence and innovation.

Moreover, Reuchlin's curiosity in Jewish sources, particularly in the Talmud, put him under the suspicion of heresy. Pfefferkorn, a baptized Jew, backed by the Dominicans of Cologne, accused Reuchlin of having been corrupted by the Jews and advocated a burning of Jewish books.

This produced a counter-blast by Reuchlin, the *Augenspiegel* or Mirror (1511), in which he testified to the value of the Jewish books for Christian theologians and for Biblical exegesis, demanded that they should not be burned, but that the Jews themselves should "by reasonable disputation be gently and kindly persuaded to our faith with the help of God." In order to further the cause of learning, Reuchlin proposed that the Emperor should establish two chairs of Hebrew at every university in his dominions and that the Jews be asked to supply the books for these chairs. The dispute increased in bitterness; accusations and slanders were flung against Reuchlin and his case was considered at Rome; on the other hand, the scholars of all countries rallied strongly to his side and celebrated him as a champion of truth and learning against monkish obscurantism. The conflict, in which the most burning issues of the time, freedom of



MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL

(1604-1657)

Original etching by  
Rembrandt

The picture on the opposite page is the house in the Strand, London, from which Menassehben Israel issued his petition to Oliver Cromwell, in 1656, which led to the legalisation of Jewish residence in England.

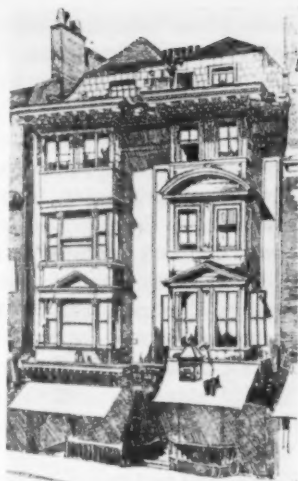
scholarship against authority, scholasticism against the "New Theology," were at stake, was fought out largely on the Jewish question. Such was the hold on men's minds of the strange and mysterious Jewish destiny amidst the world of Christendom.

### Contacts between Luther and the Jews

Luther as a young monk was a partisan of Reuchlin; he, who was later to found a new orthodoxy, was at this stage of his career eager to break away from the dry-as-dust sophistries to which the system of Thomas Aquinas had been reduced at the hands of the schoolmen of his day. Luther's attitude to the Jews was at first similar to that of Reuchlin. He, too, was a Hebrew scholar; he, too, hoped to convert the Jews and was willing to approach them in a friendly spirit, though always conscious of the curse that rested on them. Encouraged by this attitude, the Jews tried to come into contact with him and it is not unlikely that Luther's respect for the Old Testament roused Jewish hopes of converting him to Judaism. Two Jews visited him and disputed with him at Worms—a strange meeting of two worlds divided by a gulf of non-comprehension. Luther's desire of converting the Jews was bound to be disappointed and this, and perhaps other personal experiences, turned him more and more against them. In the end he poured out against them some of his most venomous invective, for instance in the pamphlet *Wider die Juden und ihre Luegen* (Against the Jews and their Lies; 1542). Luther's attacks made the lot of the Jews in the countries of the Reformation even harder than it already was as a result of the upheavals of the time.

### Influence of the Spanish Jews

While the great events of the Reformation were transforming Europe, the influx of Sephardic Jews from the Iberian peninsula after the expulsion of 1492 introduced a new and quite distinct element into the Jewish scene. With their long tradition of participation in the affairs of their countries, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews now took an active share in their new environment, particularly in the field of commerce and trade. Many Sephardic Jews are to be found amongst the daring and forward-



looking merchant adventurers, who were gradually replacing the medieval barter economy by a more far-flung and complicated money economy. The Jews undoubtedly contributed to the development of capitalist modes of commerce in many ways, for instance in the perfection of the credit mechanism. In the voyages of discovery and in the exploitation of the new colonial lands they played their part both as explorers and financiers. Apart from trade and finance, a long catalogue could be made of distinguished Spanish Jews in many walks of life, even though some of them concealed their Jewish origin. Roderigo Lopez, physician of Queen Elizabeth, later executed for treason, was such a crypto-Jew. He lived in England at a time when Jews were not officially admitted and he may have been in some sense the original of Shylock.

Of particular significance was the community of Spanish and Portuguese Jews founded at Amsterdam towards the end of the 16th century. Not only did this community help to make Amsterdam one of the most flourishing commercial cities of the age, it was also a centre of Jewish culture and nurtured many famous rabbis. Of these, Menasseh ben Israel, subject of an etching by Rembrandt, was perhaps the greatest; well-known among Jews and non-Jews alike for his theological and cabbalistic writings. He conducted a vast correspondence with prominent contemporaries, for instance with Queen Christine of Sweden. His later years were devoted to securing the re-admission of the Jews into England. He felt the home-coming of the Jews to be imminent, but before the prophecy could be fulfilled, their dispersion over the whole world, and therefore also England, would have to be complete. These and similar arguments made a deep impression on Oliver Cromwell. The extent to which Puritanism was permeated by Biblical and especially by Old Testament ideas needs no emphasis. The Lord Protector may also have calculated the commercial advantage the Jews might bring—the Navigation Acts had just been passed, trade-rivalry with Holland was bitter and the age of Mercantilism was at its height. Cromwell's proposal was resisted and he confined himself to admitting only individual Jews. Enough came over from Amsterdam, however, to found a community with a long and important history to come.

### **Spinoza and Philosophy**

Before we leave the Amsterdam community we must make mention of another of its sons whose influence was wide and enduring. Spinoza, the God-drunken philosopher as he has been called, was born in Amsterdam in 1632, of a Marrano family. The Marranos were those Spanish Jews who had been forcibly baptized and outwardly conformed to the

rites of the Catholic Church, but secretly treasured their Jewish past. Their expulsion from the Iberian peninsula made them return to the full exercise of the Jewish religion, sometimes with a fanatical zeal determined to expunge all stains of heresy. Yet traces of Catholicism lingered and the long period of concealment must have left a mark. Spinoza, passionate seeker after truth, fell foul of Jewish orthodoxy and was expelled from the Synagogue; but his Marrano origin and Jewish up-bringing are essential to his personality and work, and his interest in Jewish matters, for instance in the Cabbala and the Messianic movements that were agitating Eastern European Jewry at the time, continued unabated throughout his life. Spinoza's all-embracing view of the universe, which sought a new synthesis of Reason and Revelation at a time when the medieval scholastic system was being abandoned, left a deep mark on European thought. Above all the German idealist school of philosophers, particularly Hegel, have been influenced by it.

### Approach of Jewish Emancipation

17th century Holland was one of the countries where the idea of toleration was gradually being worked out and Spinoza watched the process from his lonely workshop and wrote his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* with this issue in the fore-front of his mind. As we have seen from the early days of the Renaissance, a close interrelation existed between the concepts and practice of toleration and freedom of thought, and the position of the Jews, however much the grounds on which these ideals were held shifted in the course of time. In the 17th century individual Jews might already enjoy a large measure of toleration, if their contribution to the national wealth was considered important in the general pursuit of mercantilist aims. The 18th century, age of Reason and Enlightenment, was to bring the full emancipation of the Jews.

### Arab Refugees

W. W. SIMPSON

*The plight of the Palestine refugees has given rise in this country to widespread sympathy with the Arabs and a critical attitude on the part of many people toward the State of Israel. The writer of this article suggests a number of considerations to be borne in mind in any attempt to understand this problem and also indicates ways of helping the refugees themselves.*

A RECENT letter to the Editor of *Common Ground*, from Mr. Norman L. Lewis, the Principal Instructor of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies at Shemlan in the Lebanon, expresses concern lest "in a pre-occupation with promoting goodwill between Christians and Jews, the Zionist view of the Palestine problem may, by implication

and perhaps unconsciously, be overstressed." He is particularly anxious that we should not overlook "the duty of every Englishman, every Christian and every Jew, to feel for and do something for the Arab refugees in Palestine" who are to be found to-day "in crowded, squalid refugee camps in the lands bordering on Palestine, or lonely, scattered in the towns and villages of those lands, surviving rather than living."

Mr. Lewis finds it "disturbing that this problem has hardly been mentioned in the last two numbers of *Common Ground*" and is not happy about a sentence on page 28 of the May-June issue where, in referring to "the very serious plight of more than three-quarters of a million Arab refugees," we mentioned the fact that they were refugees "not so much from actual persecution as from the fears engendered by political propaganda." He also felt it "a little odd" that in the following sentence we should have drawn attention to the fact that "in certain of the Arab countries . . . Jewish minorities are being subjected to all kinds of discrimination and 'cold persecution'". He is afraid that "men of goodwill will be soothed by a thousand such sentences . . . to forget the harsh fact that there has been a war in Palestine, a war in which its inhabitants have been expelled and their places taken by Jews."

### **The Question of Responsibility**

We are grateful to Mr. Lewis for writing so frankly about this most tragic situation which, we should like to assure him, is no less a matter of concern to us than it is to him. Moreover, we are in the fullest possible agreement with his conclusion that "whatever the rights and wrongs of the last thirty years, 'responsibility for the present situation must be divided' (to quote Dr. Parkes' recently published *History of Palestine from 135 A.D.*) 'between four parties, the British, the Arabs, the Jews, and the Christian Churches' ". Indeed, we would go further and say that the responsibility, particularly for the most recent developments, is more widely spread, and is shared, not merely by the British people and the Christian Churches outside of Palestine itself, but by the whole Assembly of the United Nations.

This question of responsibility is of much more than academic interest. Other letters, and conversations with many people, suggest that any danger in this country of minimising the serious plight of the Arab refugees is more than compensated for by a tendency to hold the Jews of Israel entirely responsible for the existence of the problem. But such tragedies rarely, if ever, arise simply as a consequence of the actions or policies of one group only. They are, in fact, a part of the total disorder of the present state of human society.

In judging this particular situation, therefore, we must take into account the factors that have gone to the making and intensification of modern Zionism, including the nineteenth century persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, the extermination of more than 5,000,000 Jews by the Nazis, the growth of antisemitism in other countries, and the difficulty of finding any other country than Palestine in which to settle the survivors of Nazi antisemitism. We must also take into account the factors that have gone to the creation of Arab Nationalism, including Axis-inspired opposition to the Mandatory policy of the British Government; the fear, intensified by the propaganda campaign of the Arab Higher Committee, of being supplanted by Jews; and finally the vacillations and the uncertainties both of British, United States and United Nations' policy in the Middle East.

Recognition of these factors is not to condone the evil either of the total situation or of any particular aspect of it. Thus, for example, the responsibility for the massacre of Deir Yassin rests immediately and directly upon those Jews who were actually involved in it. As soon as the news of it was made public, Mr. Ben Gurion, who was at that time Chairman of the Jewish Agency, sent a telegram to King Abdullah expressing horror and regret. But such tragedies must also be seen in relation to their total setting—in the responsibility for which we are all in some measure involved.

### **Urgent Need for Action**

In the meantime the urgent need for remedial action remains as an over-riding consideration. It may be a matter of life and death for tens of thousands that the General Assembly of the United Nations should continue its provision of food supplies beyond the period already envisaged. It will be the better able to do this if it can be clearly shown that it has the support of public opinion in the various Member States. In this connection it is to the credit of the British Government that, however hesitant they may have been in other matters of Middle Eastern policy, they have shown no hesitation in their support for the United Nations' appeal for Palestinian refugees.

There are also ways of giving direct help. The British Red Cross Society is operating a commission in Transjordan for the relief of Arab refugees, contributions to which may be sent to the Secretary, *British Red Cross Society*, 14, Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1. Contributions may also be sent direct to the Secretary, *Jewish Society for Human Service*, 14, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2., or to the *British Council of Churches*,

56, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1., which is shortly to launch an appeal for Palestinian refugees, and which will be concerned with the provision not merely of material help, but of moral and spiritual aid also. This last point is of particular importance. The psychological factor of any refugee problem is one of its most serious aspects, involving not merely the demoralisation of the refugees themselves, but also the storing up of hatreds and suspicions which may well constitute a threat to future peace.

### **Israeli Attitude**

And finally, we do well to remember the concern of the Israeli Government itself about this whole problem, both in its humanitarian and its strategic aspects. At a meeting between the United Nations Conciliation Commission and representatives of the Israeli Government on April 7th last, the Israeli Prime Minister made the following three points:—

- (i) that the refugee question should be examined and solved during the general negotiations for the establishment of peace in Palestine;
- (ii) while emphasizing the view supported by many observers that resettlement in other countries must be the main principle of any solution, this does not exclude the possibility of a measure of repatriation;
- (iii) the Israeli Government recognises the humanitarian aspect of the problem and the opportunity which would be available to the Government of Israel to share, in a spirit of sincere co-operation, in the efforts necessary for its solution.

Since that statement was made the following developments have taken place. In mid-July the Israeli Foreign Ministry invited the neighbouring Arab States to co-operate in technical arrangements for the return to Israel of certain categories of refugees. These included women with sons under fifteen years of age and unmarried daughters. It was estimated that under this scheme many thousands of the refugees would be resettled in Israel.

Later, on Wednesday, August 3rd, the head of the Israeli delegation at Lausanne informed the Conciliation Commission that his Government was prepared to share equally with the Arab States in solving the refugee problem and to accept a total of 100,000 of the refugees into Israel on condition that the Arabs would discuss an over-all peace settlement, and to accept the principle that the solution of the refugee problem should be regarded as an integral part of the total peace settlement.

To help where help is most needed is the first and foremost obligation resting upon all of us. To refrain from hasty and uncharitable judgments, to acknowledge the measure of our common responsibility, and to work for the spread of mutual understanding and goodwill is hardly less important. Indeed, without the second, the results of the first will soon become barren and ineffective.

## Commentary

### ● Human Rights: the Next Step

The definition of the principles for the ordering of the life whether of an individual, or community, is obviously a matter of primary importance. But definition alone affords no guarantee that the principles will be put into practice. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, formally adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10th last year, was therefore the first stage only of the work of the Human Rights Commission which was responsible for its preparation.

A second stage is now well under way, and a draft *Covenant on Human Rights* is already being circulated to the Member States of the United Nations for study. This draft will be reviewed in the light of comments received by January, 1950, and, it is hoped, submitted to the General Assembly in the summer of 1950. The Covenant, when finally adopted, will be legally binding on those States which ratify it, and thus pledge themselves to put into practice in their own countries the principles set out in the Covenant itself. Failure to carry out this pledge will then count as an infringement of international law.

Two aspects of this important matter deserve particular attention. First, although final decisions must necessarily be taken at the highest level, the issues involved vitally concern the rank and file members of every community. As responsible citizens, therefore, we should be ready to give support or even guidance to those who represent us in the high level negotiations. This clearly requires that we should be well informed and as a first step towards this we commend the issue of the United Nations Bulletin published on July 1st, 1949, which contains short articles on the draft Covenant by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (Chairman of the Human Rights Commission) and Mr. Charles Malik (Rapporteur), together with a report of the main points of the discussion to date. (The Bulletin can be obtained through H.M. Stationery Office or through any bookseller.)

Secondly, we must remember that legislation alone, without the sanction of an enlightened conscience, no more ensures the successful application of principles than does the definition of them, nor does the signing of a treaty necessarily ensure its observance. A special responsibility rests upon Christians and Jews therefore to challenge the world again to recognise that truth is established and rights secured not by political or legal sanctions only, but by the response of loving obedience to the revealed will and purpose of the living God.

### ● Church and State in Eastern Europe

The position of the Roman Catholic Church which has so far borne the brunt of the present struggle between Church and State in Central and Eastern Europe has recently been made crystal clear by a Vatican declaration that any Roman Catholic openly and avowedly associating with the Communist Party is by that very token excommunicated. This is neither an act of intolerance, as some suggest, nor the introduction of a religious sanction into what others regard as a purely political conflict. It is essentially a religious affirmation, not a political judgment; a statement that a man cannot subscribe both to an atheistic ideology and to the tenets of the Catholic faith.

The non-Roman Churches have not defined their position in such precise terms. Neither at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam, nor at the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at Chichester, was Communism as such condemned though in the context of both assemblies the condemnation of "totalitarianism" was clearly intended to include the Soviet-controlled countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This attitude reflects partly the traditional Protestant divorce between religion and politics, and partly a reluctance to abandon the hope that the achievements of the Communists in the field of social reform may ultimately outweigh the admitted dangers of their atheistic philosophy. There is also a deep-rooted suspicion in certain Protestant circles that the Roman Catholic Church is too interested in power politics, and a feeling that it is always ready to indulge in religious discrimination or persecution in countries where it occupies a majority position.

For a variety of reasons the Jewish communities of the world have so far shown little active concern about an issue which may seem to many of them a trifle academic, though some Jews have expressed strong sympathy with the Churches in their struggle. The Jewries of Eastern Europe today, however, are but a pale shadow of their former strength,

while their fellow-Jews in other parts of the world are preoccupied with what they deem to be more urgent problems, not the least of which, in view of the emergence of the State of Israel, is the importance of avoiding giving offence either to the Eastern or to the Western Powers.

If it be true, however, that the fundamental issue at stake in Eastern Europe today is religious and not political, and that it involves the freedom not merely to worship God in a purely formal sense but also the right to affirm the close relationship between religion and life, whether of the individual or of the community, neither Christian nor Jew can afford to be indifferent. Its importance is the greater when it is seen as a challenge not merely to reject the materialistic basis of Marxian Communism, but still more to translate into effective action those principles of freedom and justice which are inherent both in Judaism and in Christianity, and which strike at the roots of this as of all forms of totalitarian domination.

## About Ourselves

● The Council's Summer Conference will commence shortly after the appearance of this issue of *Common Ground*. At this Conference, which is to be held at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, from September 12th to 16th, there will be representatives from at least nine of our Local Councils, from the Council of Citizens of East London, from our National Council, and from various other organisations interested in furthering our aims.

The Conference programme will provide for a frank assessment of the Council's achievements to date, and for detailed consideration of future plans for national and local work.

● We look forward to a further visit early in October from Dr. Everett R. Clinchy, President of our parallel American organisation, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Dr. Clinchy, who will be accompanied by other American colleagues, will end a European tour in London to report on latest developments and discuss ways in which the British, American and other national Councils of Christians and Jews can further our aims in the international field.

● At the beginning of October also we shall have a welcome addition to

our headquarters staff in the person of Mr. A. I. Polack, who has just relinquished his House-Mastership of Polack's House, Clifton College, after 26 years. Mr. Polack joins our staff to help especially in the development of our work in the educational field. We extend a very hearty welcome to him.

His transfer to London will, however, be a loss to Bristol, where he and Mrs. Polack have been the prime movers in the establishment and development of the very active Bristol Council of Christians and Jews.

● Two days before his return to Israel after his recent American and European visit, His Eminence the Very Rev. Dr. Isaac Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Israel, addressed a private and informal meeting of members of the Council's Executive Committee and representatives of a number of associated bodies.

He explained the Israeli point of view with regard to the internationalisation of Jerusalem and the problem of the Arab refugees, and though neither Dr. Herzog himself nor those responsible for arranging the meeting expected that all the points made would command general acceptance, there was complete agreement with the Chief

Rabbi's assertion that in respect of these matters "it is of the utmost importance that we should understand each other." To that end this particular meeting made a substantial contribution.

■ One "bon mot" must be recorded. Asked whether there was any greater interest in Israel in religious matters than had been apparent in certain types of Zionist propaganda, Dr. Herzog replied that while the majority of Jews in Israel could not be described as religious in any formal sense, there was a remarkable increase of genuine religious feeling. The situation, he said, could hardly be better expressed than in the words of one Israeli Rabbi who had said that among most of the Jews in Israel "God is at present recognised *de facto* rather than *de jure*." And that says much more than may appear at first sight.

● The Clerk of the Weather, on whose goodwill the success of any outdoor event depends, was still in two minds at 2.30 on the afternoon of Wednesday, July 27th as to whether he would smile or frown on the efforts of the Manchester Council to hold a Garden Party. Happily he smiled and a slight drizzle gave place to blue sky and sunshine. Shortly afterwards the Dean of Manchester, the Rt. Rev. J. L. Wilson, C.M.G., M.A., recently returned from service in Singapore, declared the Party open, but not before he had recounted how both in Shanghai and Singapore during the war years he had experienced the full and friendly co-operation of members of both the Jewish and Roman Catholic Communities.

The afternoon and evening passed pleasantly for those who came to be entertained; strenuously for those who did the entertaining, including not only the pupils of the Urmston and Sale Ballet School who gave a series of first-class performances, and various stall-holders, but also a little group of ladies who worked tremendously hard behind the scenes providing teas; and, withal, profitably for the Council to the tune of between £30 and £40. Thanks are due to the indefatigable Mr. Hanbidge (our Manchester Secretary) and a very devoted group of fellow-workers.

● The Society of Jews and Christians, now an affiliated body of the Council and functioning mainly in the London area, was originally formed twenty-five years ago. Its Silver Jubilee was quietly but impressively celebrated recently in its Annual General Meeting. Its President, the Very Rev. Dr. W. R. Matthews, the Dean of St. Paul's, paid tribute to its past achievements and emphasised the increasing need for the kind of work it exists to do.

Following the Business Meeting Mrs. Dorothy Woolcombe, J.P., a former Magistrate in a Juvenile Court in London, read a paper on the Religious Approach to Juvenile Delinquency, which made a deep impression on those who heard it. Here indeed is a field, not merely of common concern but also of common responsibility and opportunity, for Christians and Jews alike.

● We hear good reports of the work in Germany of the International Council of Christians and Jews under the direction of the Rev. Carl F. Zietlow, on loan from the National Conference of Christians and Jews in America. Writing in the magazine of the U.S. Military Government in Germany, Mr. Zietlow tells how, in little more than one year, Councils of Christians and Jews have been set up in Munich, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and Stuttgart, with wide support from religious, educational and civic leaders. During the coming year it is intended to set up other Councils in Berlin, Bremen, Nuremberg, Karlsruhe, Kassel and Augsburg.

● In the last issue we had an article on "Trio Teams" by Mr. I. Finestein, one of the members of our first speakers' trio. Six trios are now operating from London, and at the time of writing are fully booked until next February. Manchester has now set up its first team, and we hope other Local Councils will do the same. It is interesting to note that the subject most in demand is "Has Religion Failed?"—a subject that reflects the strain of the age in which we are living, but on which Anglicans, Free Churchmen, Roman Catholics and Jews all have much to contribute.

## Book Notes

### The Stranger at the Gate

By T. J. Haarhoff

(Blackwell, 12/6)

This book explores a little known aspect of the civilisations of Greece and Rome—their attitude to the stranger at—and within—their gates. It shows clearly that one of the main reasons why the brilliant civilisation of Greece failed to maintain itself or to establish even a short period of peace and prosperity was the racial arrogance, the *Hubris* with which the Greeks were afflicted. Did not even Aristotle quote with approval Pericles' remark that "it is right that Greeks should govern over Barbarians, for Barbarians are slaves and Greeks free"? As has been our experience in our own day such an attitude, once it has been given free reign, does not stop at a high-handed arrogance towards mere "Barbarians," but gradually stultifies all power of compromise, tolerance or sympathy within the charmed circle of racial purity itself. It was for this reason that the Greek City States increasingly failed to agree among themselves; the Leagues which they formed to meet the "Barbarian Menace" broke down in factions, and their expeditions were mercilessly exploited by one state or another for their own advantage.

The Romans did not make this mistake. "What else was the ruin of the Spartans and the Athenians," asked the Emperor Claudius of his Senate, "but that strong though they were in arms, they spurned the conquered as Barbarians?" The Romans appreciated the organic nature of society. They were never fettered by racial or religious prejudice—their fear of the early Christians being, as the author points out, political in origin. Augustus allowed the Jews to mint coins which did not carry the image of the Emperor and sent presents to their temple on feast days. In spite of that hardness and lack of grace, for which they have too easily acquired the reputation of mere vulgar imitators of the Greeks, the Romans achieved a degree of political stability which has never been rivalled since. Four hundred years of comparative peace throughout the known world—how fortunate we should consider ourselves if we could but achieve a modest fifty!

In unfolding this story, the author gives us much fascinating information. Did we know for instance that the Greek Olympic Games were barred to all barbarians except Romans who were only admitted after the reign of Augustus, and the Macedonian royal family, who had first to have their genealogy suitably faked; but that nevertheless, with fitting irony, the last recorded victor is a Persian prince? The "racial purity" laws enforced by Athens are investigated in some detail, and we learn that in the age of Pericles, any Barbarian who married an Athenian woman was sold into slavery for punishment. For those who may not be very familiar with the general outline of Graeco-Roman history, this section might have been made considerably clearer had the author inserted a summary of the salient historical facts as a background to the particular attitudes and activities which he examines in such detail.

In all this there are certainly many lessons for those of us who are concerned to find in our own day some political form irradiated with the spiritual conception of *Homonoia*, unity, and the author has many wise hints to give us. But it is always dangerous to press historical comparisons too far, and one may doubt whether the author's attempt in the last chapters to draw an exact and elaborate analogy between the Boers and Romans on the one hand and the Greeks and British on the other, successfully illuminates the situation in South Africa. What of the Bantus and Zulus in whose country the Whites have settled? What of the doctrines of racial superiority preached openly by the Dutch Calvinist Church? Nor can the chapter on language, though instructive and entertaining, be considered relevant to the main thesis.

But these are small weaknesses and they do not obscure the book's originality and importance. Similar analyses of other civilisations would make valuable additions to the growing literature on group relations, and would help us to locate more clearly and dispassionately the foci of suspicion, arrogance and intolerance which still poison the world's bloodstream.

H.T.

## The Trial of Jesus Christ

By Frank J Powell

(Paternoster Press, London. 7/6)

The *Trial of Jesus Christ*, coming as it does from the pen of a distinguished lawyer, is as one would expect, a careful analysis of the greatest Trial in history. It is not surprising to find that the material on which the analysis is based is incomplete in many details. On the contrary, one is surprised, since the Trial took place nearly 2,000 years ago, that so much detail has in fact been recorded.

There are, of course, several major gaps in the chain of events before the two Courts. Mr. Powell has shown a *prima facie* case that neither at the trial before the Sanhedrin of judges, nor before Pilate, was that maxim of law satisfied which we in this country cherish, that "it is as important that justice should be seen to be done as it is that justice should be done." Faced with this situation one is driven to consider first what can or should be done about the matter, and secondly what are the consequences which have flowed from the trial of Jesus Christ.

A petition has recently been presented to the Government of Israel for the whole matter to be re-opened and a new trial held, but little good could come of such a procedure. For better or for worse the matter stands as recorded. The judges of those two trials have left to the world verdicts which, so far as we can see from incomplete material (and in the absence of a full account of the evidence tendered the judges are entitled not to be condemned!), were highly unsatisfactory.

So far as the consequences of the Trial are concerned, while generalisations are always dangerous, one is bound to consider what impression is made on the minds of children today by the thought that Jesus was unjustly condemned to death by Jewish judges. It would be too much to expect that this should not in some way prejudice their attitudes towards the Jewish people today. Indeed evidence is not wanting that it does.

In these circumstances it is particularly important that teachers and preachers should do their utmost to present the facts as objectively and as

dispassionately as possible. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus Christ himself would have been the last to desire that the recounting of the story of his trial which took place 2,000 years ago should in any way stir up hatred or antipathy towards the Jewish people today. It is to be hoped that many will find in the careful research on which Mr. Powell's book is based a help towards that objectivity of presentation for which this story calls.

EDWARD F. IWI.

## Comparative Education

By Nicholas Hans

(Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 21/-)

Dr. Nicholas Hans is Lecturer in Comparative Education at Kings College, London. His book is based on lectures delivered in two separate courses, for the Teachers' Diploma and for M.A. students. In that respect it may serve as a text-book for future students taking these courses.

But it is much more than a text-book, both in intention and in fact, for, as Dr. Hans himself has pointed out, since the first World War educational reforms have become "so intimately connected with politics, with problems of race, nationality, language and religious and social ideals, that they have ceased to be of narrow professional significance and have become a matter of general interest as the main problem of democratic government."

It is impossible in this short notice to do more than indicate the general scope of a book in which the expert no less than the layman will discover a mine of invaluable information and stimulating suggestion for thought and possible discussion. Beginning with a general survey of the scope of comparative education as a field of study, Dr. Hans goes on to examine the various factors which have gone to the shaping of the educational systems at present in operation in four countries which, in his judgment, have been the "leaders of humanity in building up a new democratic society and have supplied the ideas which later became the property of all nations and all races." These four countries are Great Britain and France, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

(Contd. on opposite page)

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

**Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein** is Principal of Jews' College, London. He is the author of a number of books on Jewish religion and philosophy.

**E. J. Feuchtwanger, B.A.**, is a historian. He lectures for the Workers' Educational Association and University College, Southampton.

**John Douglas Woodruff** is Editor of the Tablet.

The factors with which he deals are grouped under three main headings: natural—which includes the racial, linguistic, geographical and economic factors; religious—under which he examines not only the religious traditions of Europe as a whole, but also, in separate chapters, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and, as he calls them, the Puritan traditions; and finally the secular factors of humanism, socialism and nationalism.

It is perhaps rather ungracious to suggest that in one respect at least, a book which offers so much might with advantage have offered a little more, but one cannot help feeling that in his chapter on the religious traditions of Europe, Dr. Hans has dealt in rather too summary a manner with Judaism of which he writes that "during the three thousand years of its history it has been the religion of a small community isolated from the surrounding population, and has influenced Europe only in so far as the teachings of the Old Testament were incorporated in Christianity."

Apart from its serious underestimate of the importance of the post-Biblical development of Rabbinic Judaism, this reference ignores the important and indeed the almost pioneer role of the Jewish school in the general development of educational thought and practice, and also the specific part played by Jewish education in the building up of a community which, however small and relatively isolated, has been at all times a focus of interest and frequently a source of stimulus to the non-Jewish community.

In relation to the book as a whole, however, this is a matter of detailed criticism and we cannot too warmly commend this most valuable study of a vitally important aspect both of the contemporary situation and its historical background to all who believe, as who in these days does not, that education is the key to the solution of so many of our problems.

### The Jewish Monthly

(Published by the Anglo-Jewish Association, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, London. 15/- per annum.)

This is an attractive magazine with articles on many phases of Jewish life in this country. Each issue contains a commentary on current affairs, especially as they concern Anglo-Jewish relationships. There are frequently informative articles of historical interest.

### Commentary

(Published monthly by the American Jewish Committee, New York, \$5 per annum.)

The purpose of this excellently produced magazine is to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Although it is prepared with American readers mainly in view, it contains much of deep interest to a wider circle, and British readers will find the articles valuable in promoting understanding of Jewish problems.

### Common Sense

(Published monthly from 41 Commercial House, 124 Fox Street, Johannesburg, 6/- per annum.)

In 1935, the Society of Jews and Christians was formed in Johannesburg under the guidance of a team of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders of that city. They set before themselves the task of combating antisemitism and all forms of racial and religious intolerance.

The Society decided that there was great need for a first-class, unfettered journal which would challenge and inform public opinion, and so *Common Sense* came into being.

This magazine is therefore produced primarily for the S. African reader, but it contains articles and book notes of universal value. The August issue, for example, contains the text of a fine address on Palestine delivered recently by Dr. Ralph Bunche.

## A TRIO TEAM VISIT TO YOUR GROUP THIS WINTER?

THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS provides Trio Teams of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish speakers for church, synagogue, club, school and discussion circle meetings.

Teams are already established to serve London and the Home Counties, and Manchester. Write for a descriptive leaflet to the COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, KINGSWAY CHAMBERS, 162A STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

The Council is also able to arrange for individual speakers to address meetings in all parts of the country.

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